

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

March 25, 2015

Facilitator's Summary

Facilitator, Emily Plummer; Notes, Tory Hines DS Consulting

The following Facilitator's Summary is intended to capture basic discussion, decisions and actions, as well as point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Chum Spawning Operation

Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported on the chum spawning operation. He summarized last week's discussion centering on balancing chum tailwater elevation below Bonneville and upstream elevation and spring/summer flow augmentation needs. At this point, the balance greatly depends on stream flows, which due to the recent series of rain events are adequate to continue the 13ft tailwater elevation. Paul noted that stream flows are up and NOAA's 10 day forecast shows adequate water in the lower river. He also noted that Chum are well into the estimated emergence period. The data provided from the December 5th red survey is not inclusive of all fish and the recommendation is to continue with protection efforts by maintaining 13 feet. TMT will revisit the chum operation at the April 1st TMT meeting.

Dworshak Operations Update:

Steve Hall, USACE-Walla Walla, reported that the Corps requested and received a flood control deviation for Dworshak. He noted that the risk analysis was sent out last night and the deviation allows the project to operate 9 feet higher than the normal flood control. The project is planning to shift to full powerhouse for two days. There was uncertainty around when exactly the project will shift to full powerhouse, however Joe Skalicky, USFWS, and Steve will connect to solidify if the operation begins today at 6:00pm or midnight tonight. This operation is planned to supply additional water for the Dworshak Hatchery release on Thursday and Friday, March 26 and March 27. Following the release, the project will return to 7.5kcfs and hold through the end of the month, likely ending the month around 1,586ft. Steve continued, that depending on the water supply forecast, the Corps is expecting to operate at about 2/3 powerhouse capacity through the month of April, to help out the fish, and then refill near the end of May or middle of June. He noted that this proposed operation will revert to normal flood control in April and it is expected that the water supply forecast will fall to mid-60% of the average, based on snow on the ground. He noted that due to the water supply forecast, the end of April flood control target elevation is higher, with the target elevation likely within the top 10 feet of the pool, as such the Corps will operate accordingly.

Salmon Managers extended appreciation to Steve and the Corps for their efforts provide better flow conditions in April and in May. It was noted that the Corps is using 1992 as the analog year for modeling and have looked at 1977, 1992 and 2007 as analog years based on the 2015 forecast.

The next TMT meeting will be a face to face meeting on April 1st at 9:00am.

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM—OFFICIAL MINUTES

March 25, 2015
Minutes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Today's TMT conference call was facilitated by Emily Plummer, DS Consulting. Representatives of NOAA, Washington, USFWS, Colville Tribe, Idaho, BOR, COE, CRITFC/Umatilla, BPA, Oregon and others participated. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

2. Chum Operations Update

Last week's TMT discussion focused on whether there would be sufficient water to maintain a minimum 13 ft elevation in the Bonneville tailwater throughout chum emergence without tapping water supplies from upstream reservoirs that will be needed for spring migration. Thanks to recent rain, the current streamflow forecast for McNary and the lower river indicates there will likely be enough water to support a 13 ft tailwater elevation without jeopardizing storage for augmentation flows in April, Paul Wagner, NOAA, said. Scott Bettin, BPA, agreed with this assessment.

There have been no new data reported since last week's data regarding accumulation of temperature units, so the assumption is that chum emergence is proceeding as previously estimated, Wagner reported. The data, based on a December 5 survey of chum redds, may not account for TU accumulation and hatch dates at all redd elevations, as discussed in last week's TMT meeting. For that reason, and because it apparently won't put storage at risk, the salmon managers requested today that 13 ft elevation in the Bonneville tailwater be maintained for another week as added protection. Wagner will supply FPAC with updated data on TU accumulation if available prior to the next TMT meeting on April 1, and FPAC will provide a consensus recommendation on the chum operation at that time.

3. Dworshak Operations Update

Since TMT last met on March 18, the COE Walla Walla received approval of its flood control deviation request for Dworshak operations, Steve Hall, COE, reported. The approved deviation will allow Dworshak reservoir to end the month approximately 9 ft higher than its March 31 flood control elevation target of 1,577.7 ft. The current operation calls for discharge of 7.5 kcfs through end March, while ramping up tonight for two days of full powerhouse flows on March 25-26 to augment the release of 1.5 million smolts from Dworshak National Fish Hatchery. Joe Skalicky, USFWS, raised the possibility that the smolts might need to be released as early as this evening. He will follow up with Hall to modify Dworshak operations if necessary to accommodate an earlier release.

On Saturday, Dworshak will return to 7.5 kcfs outflows through the end of March, which should put the reservoir at approximately 1,586 ft elevation on March 31, nearly 9 ft higher than the flood control target.

In April the current plan is for the project to return to normal flood control operations. The plan is to release approximately 2/3 of powerhouse capacity for fish flows through April, with refill occurring in end May or early June. The Dworshak water supply forecast is expected to drop to around 65% of normal in April, which would significantly raise the end of April flood control target elevation. It's possible that Dworshak will end April within the top 10 ft of full. In the meantime, the COE is operating the project conservatively, using 1977, 1992 and 2007 as analog years. All three years had low inflows in June. Conversely, with the reservoir likely near full earlier than in most years, Hall added that Walla Walla will be watching for late season rain events and adjust operations accordingly.

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, and Charles Morrill, Washington, thanked the COE for taking proactive steps now to aid fish migration in April and May.

4. Next TMT Meeting

TMT will meet next on April 1, with the location to be announced via email.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Charles Morrill	Washington
Joe Skalisky	USFWS
Sheri Sears	Colville
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Mary Mellema	BOR
Lisa Wright	COE
Karl Kanbergs	COE
Tory Hines	DSC
Greg Lawson	Thompson Reutters
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla
Scott Bettin	BPA
Erick Van Dyke	Oregon